

Through Senator DOMENICI's discussions it became evident that a wide gulf separated the views of the Administration and Russian leadership with regard to the appropriate disposition actions. The Russians hold the position that plutonium has great value, and want to ensure that any actions extract the energy resource remaining in the material by using it as reactor fuel. The U.S. was considering both recovery of this resource and immobilization. Immobilization mixes the plutonium with ceramic material and surrounds it with vitrified, high-level waste for long term storage. Some scientists and some Russian leaders have noted that immobilization may be a less secure means of disposition than use as a reactor fuel.

Senator DOMENICI encouraged a solution wherein both nations would pursue the reactor fuel option, with so-called mixed oxide or MOX fuel. In addition, the U.S. can use immobilization for some of its less pure materials that would require significant purification to incorporate into reactor-grade fuel. This solution has been embraced in the current negotiations by both countries. Now both nations are moving toward parallel reductions in amounts of plutonium.

Our Task Force has been briefed by the Departments of State and Energy on the current status of negotiations on a Framework Agreement to implement a plutonium disposition process in Russia and the United States. A U.S.-Russian agreement to dispose up to 50 metric tons of weapons grade material on each side is proceeding in a very positive direction. I am hopeful that they will soon produce a draft agreement. There are still important issues to be resolved and hurdles to be cleared but it is clear that we would not have enjoyed this significant progress if it were not for Senator DOMENICI's leadership. His efforts in cooperation with Senator STEVENS, the Chairman of our Appropriations Committee, to secure forward funding for the implementation of this agreement was crucial in securing Russian participation.

I commend my good friend, the senior Senator from New Mexico, for his leadership in this area and thank him for what I hope will be a tremendously valuable national security program. We will all watch the negotiations proceeding in Moscow and hope for a positive conclusion. When this agreement is finalized and implemented, which I believe it will be, each of us will owe Senator DOMENICI a debt of gratitude for making the world safer for our children and grandchildren.

RETIREMENT OF GEORGE T. COSTIN

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to commend and congratulate George T. Costin, Library Technician, upon the occasion of his retirement from the Senate Library

on February 8, 2000. For 32 years—27 in the Office of the Secretary of the Senate—George has labored selflessly every day supporting the work of the Senate. George left his home state of North Carolina in 1963 and a brief stop over in Washington lasted for more than three decades.

George began his Senate career with the Sergeant at Arms in 1967 and joined the Library staff in 1972. He has made our duties far easier and throughout the years he has been the Ambassador of Goodwill with his wonderful smile, kind words, and unmatched style. He was always proud of being part of the Senate Family.

George will be very busy in retirement with church activities, a demanding golf schedule, and the joy of a new grandson. Along with all of his friends, I commend George for his loyalty and dedicated service to the United States Senate. I know that all Senators will join me in thanking George, his wife Gloria, and his three children, Angie, Samantha, and George, Jr., for his dedicated and distinguished service. It is with deep appreciation that we extend our best wishes for many years of health and happiness.

FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues, Senator SPECTER, as primary cosponsor of a sense of the Senate resolution, introduced yesterday, that puts the Senate on record that funding for NIH should be increased by \$2.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2001. NIH is the premier medical research institution in the world—research funded by NIH is key to maintaining the quality of our health care and key to finding preventive measures, cures and the most cost effective treatments for the major illnesses and conditions that strike Americans.

Two years ago, our Appropriations Subcommittee provided NIH with a \$2 billion increase to set us on a five-year course to double NIH funding over five years. Last year, our Subcommittee was able to secure a \$2.3 billion increase for NIH—continuing on the course to double NIH funding over five years. A \$2.7 billion increase for NIH in Fiscal Year 2001 would keep us on track to double NIH in the five years.

I was disappointed that the President's budget which we received today only requested a \$1 billion increase for NIH. Funding biomedical research is especially important now when research on stem cells and progress made on the Human Genome project offer such promise. I hope to work closely with Senator SPECTER this year to build on last year's increase for NIH as we move to doubling funding for NIH by 2003.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday,

February 7, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,693,618,340,748.18 (Five trillion, six hundred ninety-three billion, six hundred eighteen million, three hundred forty thousand, seven hundred forty-eight dollars and eighteen cents).

Five years ago, February 7, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,806,973,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred six billion, nine hundred seventy-three million).

Ten years ago, February 7, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$2,988,020,000,000 (Two trillion, nine hundred eighty-eight billion, twenty million).

Fifteen years ago, February 7, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,682,610,000,000 (One trillion, six hundred eighty-two billion, six hundred ten million).

Twenty-five years ago, February 7, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$489,675,000,000 (Four hundred eighty-nine billion, six hundred seventy-five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,203,943,340,748.18 (Five trillion, two hundred three billion, nine hundred forty-three million, three hundred forty thousand, seven hundred forty-eight dollars and eighteen cents) during the past 25 years.

MEASURE PLACE ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

S. 2036. A bill to make permanent the moratorium on the imposition of taxes on the Internet.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-7432. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Budget Estimates and Performance Plan," Fiscal Year 2001; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-7433. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Eligibility Criteria for the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty and Other Miscellaneous Issues" (RIN2900-AI63), received February 7, 2000; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-7434. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Andean Trade Preference Act; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7435. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7436. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Travel and Tour Activities of Tax-Exempt Organizations" (RIN1545-AW10), received February 7, 2000; to the Committee on Finance.